

# Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning



## Farmworker Housing Ordinance Community Outreach Meeting Presentation



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# Why a Farmworker Housing Ordinance?

- The State of California considers the availability of safe and decent housing for farmworkers and their families an issue of Statewide importance.
- Recently adopted Los Angeles County Housing Element commits to implementing a required program: Farmworker Housing Assistance, which commits the County to amending its zoning code.
- Ensure that the County's provisions for farmworker housing meet the requirements of the **Employee Housing Act** (Sections 17000-17062.5 of the Health and Safety Code).
- Clarify the requirements of the Employee Housing Act through a clear set of standards within the County's zoning code.



# State Law

- Sections 51220-51222 of the Government Code identify farmworkers as the lowest average wage earners in the State, and acknowledge efforts to address the need for farmworker housing as part of the effort to preserve agricultural land as an important public interest.
- Sections 17021.5 and 17021.6 of the Health and Safety Code indicate that employee housing provided to six or fewer, but no less than five employees, shall be considered a single-family structure and a residential land use. In addition, the Sections consider employee housing consisting of 36 beds in group living quarters or 12 units for families and households as an agricultural land use.



# Farmworker Housing Ordinance

## Does

- Amend the Los Angeles County zoning code
- Allow certain types of farmworker housing through a non-discretionary (no public hearing) process
- Facilitate the land use permitting process for building employee housing

## Does Not

- Create housing for farmworkers and their families
- Provide subsidies or funding to build farmworker housing

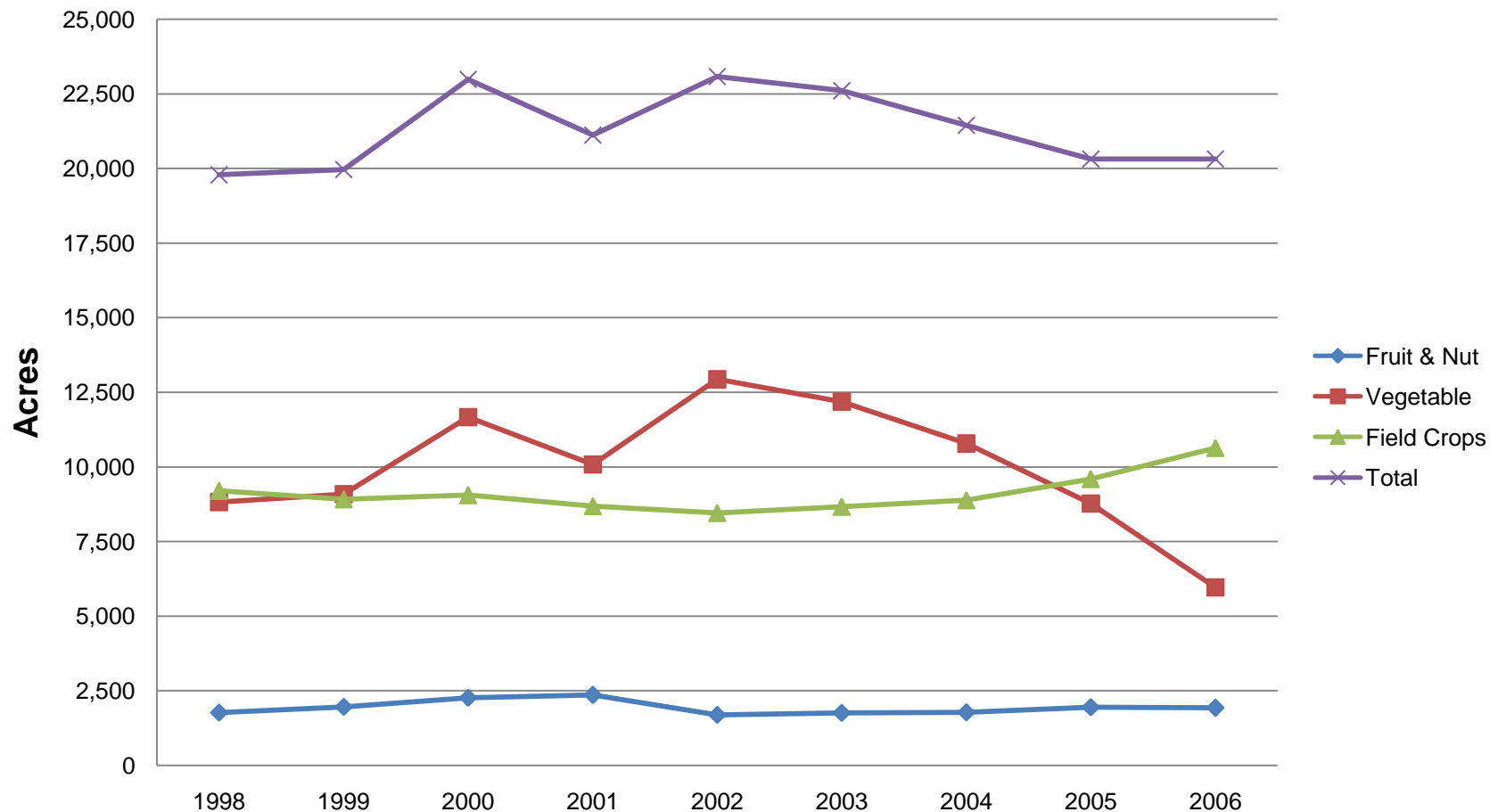


# Overview of Research

- Interviewed various stakeholders, including growers, legal aid attorneys, farmworker advocates, and affordable housing developers;
- Reviewed farmworker housing ordinances in other local jurisdictions;
- Conducted field visits to the areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County that are still actively farmed; and
- Distributed a survey to farmers and growers in the unincorporated areas.



# Acres Farmed in Los Angeles County (1998-2006)



Source: Los Angeles County Crops and Livestock Reports, 1998-2006

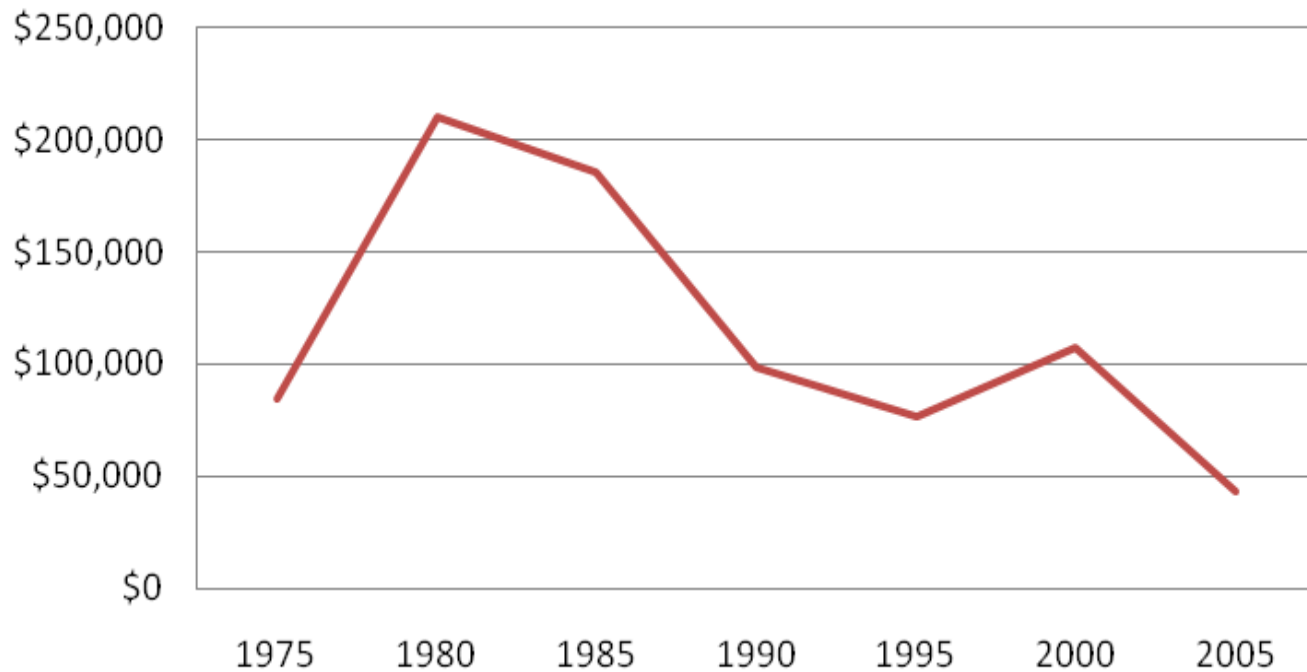
# Summary of Los Angeles County's Active Agricultural Land Uses

	Number of Farms	Farmland (acres)	% of Total Farmland
Total Farms	1,543	111,458	100.00%
Farms with Cropland	839	50,931	45.70%
Farms with Harvested Cropland	707	24,033	21.56%
<i>Wheat</i>	3	442	0.40%
<i>Vegetable</i>	58	7,079	6.35%
<i>Orchards</i>	314	2,764	2.48%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2002 Census of Agriculture



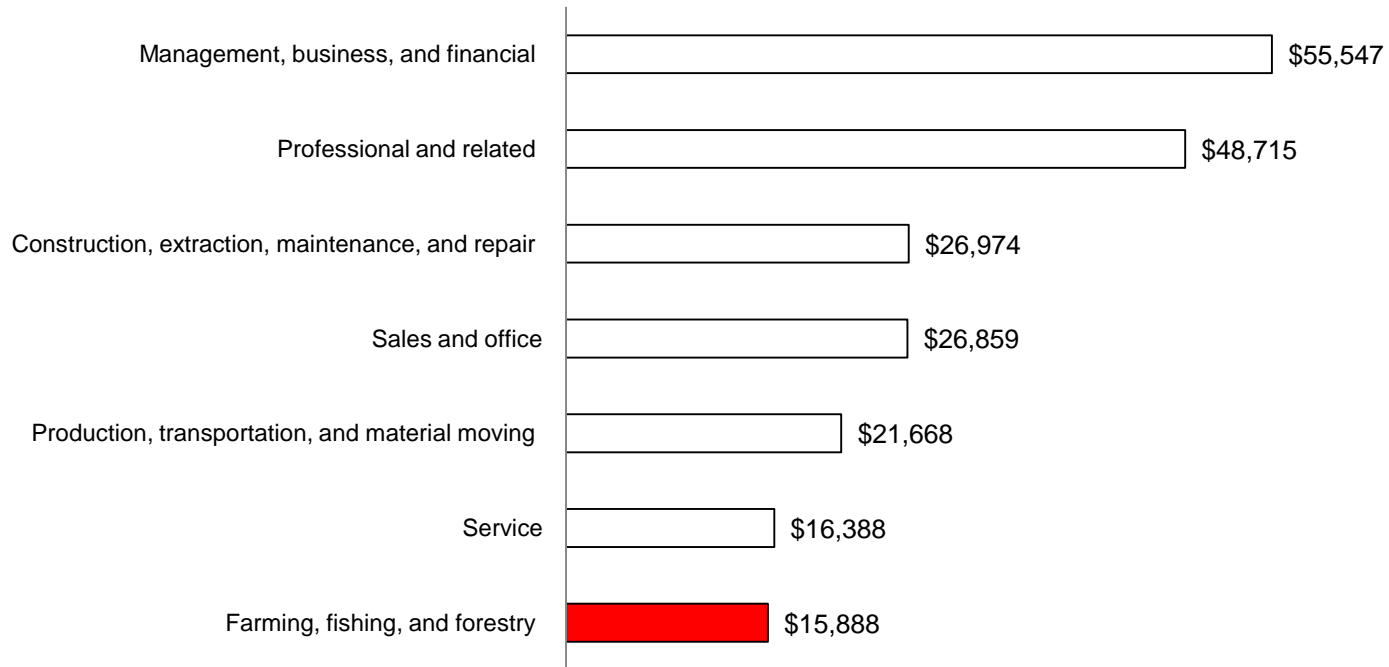
## Net Farm Income in LA County (2005 Adjusted Dollars)



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis



# Median Earnings by Occupation in Los Angeles County (2006)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey. Table B24011.



# Agricultural Production & Farm Labor Survey

- Total number of surveys sent: 258
- Surveys returned in the mail: 19
- Surveys completed: 37
- Response rate: 15.48%



# Survey Highlights

- Total land farmed by all survey respondents equals 23,653 acres;
- Nearly 70% of the employee base is part-time seasonal workers;

<i>Breakdown by Employee Type</i>	<i>Number of Workers</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Full-time permanent	124	16.64%
Part-time permanent	101	13.56%
Part-time seasonal	520	69.80%
	<b>745</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- 4 agricultural operators provide some type of employee housing. In total these operators provide 29 units of on-site, permanent, year-round housing and zero units of temporary or permanent seasonal housing;
- As for those operators that do not provide housing, 10 indicated that there is not a need; 4 stated that it is not financially feasible; 5 cited high permitting fees; and 4 believe the permitting process is too onerous;
- 17 survey respondents answered the question regarding farmworker housing need, and the answer was split nearly 50-50. 8 respondents stated that there is a need for more farmworker housing in their community, while 9 stated that there is no need;
- 54% (13) of the survey respondents believe that the opportunities for agricultural production will decline in the next 10 years. 33% (8) believe agriculture will remain stable, while 12.5% (3) are optimistic that opportunities will thrive.



# Agriculture in Unincorporated Los Angeles County







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# Examples of Farmworker Housing





Tents pitched by farmworkers in the Antelope Valley. This is an unfortunate reality for many farmworkers.



On-site, employer provided housing for farmworkers and their families.  
Located in the City of Lancaster.

On-site housing  
provided by  
Limoneira, a large  
citrus farm in  
Ventura County.





Off-site, single-family housing for farmworkers and their families developed by non-profit housing developers. Located in Ventura County.

Off-site, multi-family housing developed by a non-profit housing developer. Located in Ventura County.



# Key Findings

1. Over the years, agricultural production has continued to decline in Los Angeles County;
2. Despite this decline, many active agricultural uses still exist, which creates a need for permanent housing for farmworkers and their families in unincorporated Los Angeles County;
3. In addition, due to the increased labor demand during the harvest season, there is a need for temporary seasonal housing for unaccompanied migrants;
4. Finally, addressing this need requires a comprehensive solution, and facilitating the land use permitting process is only one of many steps.



# Discussion Questions

- What challenges do farmworkers face in finding affordable housing?
- In your community, is there a need for temporary housing for farmworkers? What about permanent housing? Why or why not?
- Besides the land use permitting process, what other factors make it difficult for employers to provide housing to their employees?



# Thank-you!



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